

NC MLK, Jr. Commission Meeting Minutes

10:00 am, December 7, 2017

NC Department of Environmental Quality, 5th floor Board Room 5001
217 W. Jones Street, Raleigh NC

Present: Commissioners White, Bailey, Jarvis, Smith, Jeffers, Futrell, Jones, Ealy, Huggins

Absent: Commissioners Partee, Freeman, Goins, Dinner, Harshaw, Posey, Sturdivant

Guests: Deputy Secretary of North Carolina Department of Administration Christy Agner, Administrative Secretary Cindy Olsen, Director of the African American Heritage Commission, Michelle Lanier, OSHR Diversity & Inclusion Program Coordinator Bryle Henderson Hatch, Governor's Office Director of Public Engagement, Michael Leach.

Call to Order - Meeting was called to order by Chairman James White at 10:00 am and an invocation was offered, in remembrance of Pearl Harbor day. The Conflict of Interest Statement was read to attending members. No conflicts were identified.

Staff Updates – Deputy Secretary Agner welcomed everyone and provided an update about the November 2017 MLK Grant Application submission and review process. The Commission received twenty-four MLK Grant applications, of which twenty-three were eligible for review. Staff reviewed steps taken to recruit for applications, including a press release, contacts with local youth organizations, Human Relations Commissions, Black Elected officials network and promotion by individual MLK Commissioners. Due to the number of applications, volunteer reviewers served as a subcommittee to conduct an initial review. The members were Christy Agner, Betty Marrow Taylor and Phillip Jordan. A chart of each applicant and relevant details of the submission was prepared and presented for review by the Commissioners, as well as copies of each application.

Staff shared the intent for everyone who submitted a MLK Grant application to receive an acknowledgement letter thanking them for their application. Chairman White introduced guest Michael Leach, Office of the Governor, Community & Citizen Services division. He is the Liaison appointed to work with the MLK, Jr. Commission. Mr. Leach stated he has worked with his local MLK, Jr. Commission and offered his support and to help advance this Commission's goals. Bryle Henderson Hatch with the Office of State Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion division, was introduced as a guest and offered his assistance with creating the proclamation and putting together a list of MLK, Jr. events taking place in our area.

Oath of Office - Chairman James White introduced District Court Judge Ashleigh Dunston, to conduct the swearing in of two new MLK, Jr. Commission members. Chairman James White was sworn in at the beginning of the meeting and the Honorable Ann Huggins was sworn in by Judge Ashleigh Dunston at the lunch break. A photo commemorating the event was taken.

Old Business – Deputy Secretary Agner shared an update on the planning for the State Employees MLK, Jr. Observance program with the commission members. The Commission was encouraged to focus on the

commemorative Bell Ringing and was invited to participate in the Observance program. Chairman White shared plans to coordinate with the Governor's Office to ensure things go smoothly with the planning of the MLK, Jr. Observance event this year.

Review\Approval of Minutes - Chairman White requested members review copies of the meeting minutes from prior commission meetings held on March 23, 2017 and Sept. 7, 2017. Chairman White asked if there were any comments or corrections to be made to either of the meeting minutes. There were none. Commissioner Bailey made a motion and Commissioner Smith seconded the motion that the minutes be passed as written.

Chairman's Discussion - Chairman James White engaged with commission members in a "moment of connection" to focus on the importance and reality of our work and its challenges, which are still critical and needed. Chairman White shared a copy of Jet magazine dated April 25, 1978. He pointed out at that time, the magazine shared what the world was saying after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Chairman White asked the question to commission members, why are we still passionate about Dr. King? Each commissioner shared personal remarks either about their experience with Dr. King's passing, his message or his legacy. Several Commissioners discussed the similarities of the times during Dr. King's messages and current community affairs. Commissioners acknowledged that those citizens without firsthand knowledge of the racial tensions and community challenges were at risk of hearing Dr. King's messages solely through an academic lens. Commissioners renewed their interest to shed light on Dr. King's dream and mission.

New Business – A list of local MLK, Jr. 2018 commemoration activities developed by DOA and OSHR was shared. Commissioners were asked to add any known additional local events. This list was created as a resource for the MLK, Jr. Commission to find local events to attend.

MLK, Jr. Bell Ringing Ceremony – Commissioners discussed previous bell ringing events, what they entailed, and an evaluation of continuing what has been done in the past or create something new. Guest Michelle Lanier, with the African American Heritage office, shared information about the significance of the Liberty Bell Ringing at the event and potential assistance from the Heritage Commission. Commissioners discussed the importance of having a press release and possibly offer a video of the Bell Ringing to share with citizens. The question was asked about what other states are doing to commemorate Dr. King. An idea was shared about churches with bells joining us at the time of our bell ringing. The bell ringing could be a standalone activity or it can be done along with the State Employees Observance Program. Generally, local communities seem to customize the bell ringing to meet local awareness goals. Chairman White offered to speak with the Governor's Office about beginning the State Employees Observance Program with the bell ringing.

MLK, Jr. Commission Grant Application Selection – Copies of the MLK, Jr. Grant application spreadsheet were distributed, including scores from the Subcommittee. Commissioners reviewed notebooks with the grant applications in groups to discuss their recommendations as to which programs should receive the funding. After much review, discussion, and questions over the applications, Commissioner Futrell made a

motion to accept the top six applications using the commission's criteria used in the past. The breakdown of the total \$5,000 grant funding distribution of awards was decided as follows:

Mediation Center of Eastern Carolina	\$937.00
Movement of Youth/My Brother's Keeper	\$1,000.00
Sandhills Community College	\$900.00
HOLLA!	\$1,000.00
LEAD Girls of NC, Inc.	\$500.00
Joshua Education Services	\$667.00

In the event a grantee chooses not to return a contract by the end of the deadline, two additional programs, Oakhill Heritage House Museum & Research and Hand in Mine, Inc, would be eligible for unexpended funding. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Discussion regarding the MLK, Jr. Commission's purpose – Chairman White led a discussion of the commission members regarding the purpose of the Commission. Chairman White read aloud the mission of the MLK, Jr. Commission from 1993, as listed in the Statutes. Discussion followed with Commissioners sharing their comfort with the statutory purpose. Chairman White shared each commission member could reach out through social media to get the word out about upcoming MLK, Jr. events in their area. Commissioner Ealy shared the value of having a template to assist with messaging.

Future meetings – Staff asked if the Commission would like to meet again on January 12, 2018. Chairman White asked if the commissioners would like to change future meeting locations, perhaps hosted by the building he works in that has free parking and technology options. Commissioners agreed to move the meeting location after the January 12, 2018 meeting. Discussion followed regarding the bell ringing and the State Employees Observance program scheduled for January 12. There was also discussion on when to distribute the grant funds to each of the chosen non-profits. It was agreed that the MLK, Jr. Commission will have a brief meeting on Friday, January 12, 2018 in Raleigh. The meeting will be followed by a Bell Ringing / State Employees Observance Program at the First Baptist Church on Salisbury Street. A reception will follow.

A closing prayer was offered and the meeting was adjourned by Chairman White

Minutes approved January 12, 2018